

I submit to you this is only ferment. This is not the wine. This is only evidence of immaturity in the political thinking of the eighteen-, nineteen-, twenty-, and twenty-one-year-olds. I think we should retain the age of twenty-one years.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss.

DELEGATE KOSS: Mr. Chairman: I yield three minutes to Delegate Byrnes.

DELEGATE BYRNES: Thank you, Madam Koss.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to answer Delegate Cardin, if I may. I suggest to the Committee of the Whole, that at no time did the Committee suggest that the legal age should be reduced but that independent judgments should be made in each one of these areas.

We said these are legislative concerns, that we were down here discussing the voting age and not discussing tentative items that Delegate Cardin was suggesting that we consider. So that is why we rejected it.

We would also like to clear the record, and suggest to you that the students found on the campuses who said that there was not a great deal of student participation in these activities, made the point simply because they did not consider student government to be a serious matter. But they did certainly consider the government of their state and county and their national government to be a very serious matter, and overwhelmingly, 300 to 1, they asked us to give them the opportunity to participate in the government of their country.

Now, I suggest to you that the problem with our political life today, I think, is that it lacks idealism, it lacks, if you want to call it, naivete of the people, purity of their thoughts, absence of prejudice in their views.

I think this is something we can all well benefit by.

Many of us when we reach the age of twenty-one begin to vote in the manner of self interest; how does it affect my wallet, and my bonds. To the extent that these people in the nineteen to twenty-one-year-old age group vote in a pure manner, I think this would certainly be in the best interests of our country and our state.

We have no evidence that these people lack the responsibility that is necessary to vote. Affirmatively we have found that they do in fact possess it. The burden is on those who would suggest that they cannot participate in our government.

I think the burden is on the former, and they have not met it. Thank you, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Rybczynski.

DELEGATE RYBCZYNSKI: I call on Delegate Johnson to speak for three minutes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Johnson.

DELEGATE JOHNSON: Mr. Chairman and ladies and gentlemen of the Committee of the Whole: I arrived at my position on this matter by a relatively simple procedure, but not without giving serious consideration to both sides of the question.

I neither received a mandate from my constituents nor did I harbor any pre-Convention ideas on the subject matter. I used a very easy procedure, one that I have used in many matters that came before the Committee of the Whole.

If our present Constitution contained an unworkable provision and if the evidence were clear and uncontradicted that a new provision would be better, then I submit that I am for the new provision.

But on the other hand, if the other system works well without hardship, and a proposed change may or may not be better, then I submit that experience compels us that there shall not be a change just for the sake of change.

Many reasons have been given to change our historic voting age requirement, but I submit to you, has experience not taught us to exercise restraint as the Committee of the Whole did the other day on the lottery question?

We cannot and we should not accept every so-called popular theory that comes along. In my opinion, and although I do not advocate it, there is as much evidence for increasing the voting age limit as decreasing it, and twenty-one seems more than a reasonable compromise. It is a compromise because if there were advocates for a higher voting age, the proponents of a lower voting age would be more than satisfied to retain twenty-one years of age as the voting age.

I ask you to consider that after adulthood, any age is an arbitrary age. The question is when does an individual become a reasonably intelligent adult, at least partially capable of exercising the right of franchise?

I am not suggesting that we use any other test except in cases of incompetency